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Helping Organizations Retain Their Most Valuable Asset

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Tips for Selecting Summer Camps

The camp experience will have a lasting impact on your child, so there are a number of issues that should be seriously considered when selecting a summer camp. Some questions you should ask yourself are:

- What do you and your child hope that they will get out of going to camp?
- Is there a specific topic (religion, sports, and arts) that you hope they will gain ability and experience in?
- If you have more than one child would they benefit from attending the same camp?
- How far from you and for how long would your child be comfortable. If you think that your child may not be ready for residential camp, choose a local one in case you end up making a late night pickup.
- How much are you willing to pay? Take time to consider what you can reasonably afford.
- Does your child have any special needs that need to be accommodated? While most camps are equipped for campers with disabilities, not all have staff trained to work with children with attention deficit disorder, learning disabilities, or special medical problems.

Source: www.pueblo.gsa.gov

Parenting Through Separation and Divorce



Separation and divorce are hard enough on adults, much less adolescents or children. Parents going through relationship difficulties or the dissolution of marriage are sometimes so caught up in the emotional turmoil they forget that their children can easily become victims. It is very common for people to forget they are parents and focus solely on the anger, disappointment or feelings of betrayal associated with their spouse or significant other. To children, the loss of their parents' relationship is tantamount to the end of the world. The parents that nurtured and protected them are now the same people who fight, yell, and say bad things to each other.

As difficult as these situations can be, here are a few do's and don'ts which you should keep in mind if you are going through a separation or divorce and have children of almost any age:

DON'TS:

1. Don't fight in front of your children. If you disagree, do it in private, between adults and keep the kids out of it. Remember to always show unity to your children. You may not always be married, but you will always BOTH be their parents. You need to put aside your personal differences and continue to parent your children.
2. Don't cover up or lie about what is happening to the family. Children always know, on some level, when something is going on or different in their family. You can't keep it from them, so don't even try.
3. Don't use the children to carry angry messages to the other parent. Children need to know that both their parents love and care about them. Using children as messengers demeans them and causes them to have to take sides. Don't put your children in the position where they have to choose. It is difficult enough on them already.
4. Don't tell children marital secrets or personal details. Keep them out of your business. Keeping healthy boundaries between parents and children is even more important at this time.
5. Don't involve the children in legal or financial issues. Whenever possible, don't make them choose between you, legally or otherwise. Equal custody, with parents who are consistent with the rules, contributes greatly to positive, healthy outcomes for children of divorce.
6. Don't try to elicit emotional support from your kids. They need your support. Get emotional support from your parents, siblings and adult friends, not your children.
7. Don't force your kids to grow up and be "the man of the house" or "my little woman." Children need and deserve their time to be children.

DOS:

1. Do make sure the children know they are loved and will be taken care of. Reassure them that you will be there for them no matter what happens.
2. Do prepare your children for the changes that will be taking place in their family. Sit down and talk to them on a level they can understand about what they can expect in the near future.
3. Do allow your child to express their feelings. They may be feeling fear, anger, anxiety or uncertainty. It is normal for them to be feeling these things and it is important for you to normalize their feelings and let them know that having these feelings is all right.
4. Do let your child know that the divorce or separation was not their fault. It is very common for children to believe that somehow they are responsible for the difficulties you are having with your spouse. Quite often they harbor the fantasy that they can somehow

get you back together again if they just behave better or follow the rules or don't do anything wrong. It is important for you to discuss these issues with them and allay their fears.

HMS is here to help

Sometimes our problems are too hard to solve on our own. If you are concerned about a particularly difficult marital, relationship, or family issue, Human Management Services (HMS) can help you. Remember, HMS can assist you with any type of personal, family or work-related concern. And, HMS counseling is convenient, confidential and offered at no cost to the employee. Why not call an HMS counselor today? We're here to help.

What's The Worst Kind Of Stress?

According to the latest research on stress, the most harmful form of stress is not the result of major life crises – the death of a spouse, divorce, the loss of a job – as once believed. While the stress associated with these events is often severe, it is also short-lived and therefore has little time to damage to our bodies.

Far worse, current research reports, is the chronic, uncontrolled low-level tension caused by our responses to the pressures and irritations of everyday life – such as difficulties at work or at home, anger, rejection, interruptions, being late for work, financial anxieties, arguing with a loved one, deadlines. Each little frustration that occurs throughout the day speeds the heart rate, dilates the pupils and floods the bloodstream with powerful hormones. In the long term, this uncontrolled low-level tension forces the body to go into overdrive, sapping our energy and damaging our physical and emotional health.

How Can I Take Care Of Myself?

The good news is that it is our response to a given situation that determines whether we are feeling "stressed" or not. What's upsetting to you may not irritate your spouse or a co-worker at all.

"Don't blame stress on your environment," says Kenneth Lichstein, Ph.D. "Stress is not something external but a product of the mind and therefore something that each of us can control."

Breaking the grip of stress

Try some of these suggestions at home or at work to help you more effectively

manage the stress in your life:

1. Talk it over – When tensions build up, discuss the problem with a close friend, a professional, or with the people involved.
2. Recognize the things that upset you – If something is increasing your stress, ask yourself, "Is there anything I can do to change the situation?" If there is, figure out what you can do. If not, find ways to accept this lack of control.
3. Practice deep breathing – Sit comfortably with your hands on your lap. Roll your head and hunch your shoulders up and down a few times. Next, breathe in evenly through your nose, then blow out gently through your mouth. On each exhale, silently repeat the word "peace" or "relax." Do this for 5 minutes, 3 times a day. This technique, known as the "relaxation response," has been proven to reduce blood pressure and lower stress.
4. Exercise regularly – Exercise for 30 minutes a day, at least 3 days a week. As a way of working off tension and stress, nothing beats exercise. Activities such as walking, jogging, bicycling, swimming, racquet sports, aerobic classes and dancing are the good choices to dissipate stress energy.

HMS is here to help

If excessive stress is negatively impacting your personal, work or family life, Human Management Services (HMS) can help you learn how to better handle the stress in your life. Why not call an HMS counselor today? We provide FREE and CONFIDENTIAL counseling, referrals and information to help you or your dependents meet life's challenges and difficulties.

HMS SERVICES

PROVIDED BY YOUR EMPLOYER FOR YOU AND YOUR DEPENDENTS

This confidential prepaid program is designed to help employees and their eligible dependents resolve problems which may be interfering with their personal, work or home life. HMS offers help for marital and family issues, substance abuse, job concerns, emotional problems, life adjustments, legal issues, financial matters, and elder care and child care referrals.

If you're experiencing problems which are causing concern, you and your HMS counselor can work as a team to find solutions.

Call HMS for Help:
24 Hours a day: 800-343-2186
www.hmsincorp.com

